

a housing for forming a positioning frame opening;
a blank stamp platen biased into a predetermined idle position within the housing;
a stamp impression member seated in a receptacle disposed intermediate the stamp platen and the frame opening;
an axially resilient bellows extending between the handle and the housing;
a stem surrounded by the bellows and connecting the handle to the stamp platen for moving the platen relative to the housing from the idle position into an engaging position with the receptacle; and
and snap-fit means for connecting the platen to the receptacle.

Please amend claim 6 as follows:

6. (Amended) The hand stamp of claim 5, wherein the bellows is formed integrally with the handle.

Cancel claim 9.

Please amend claim 11 as follows:

11. (Amended) The hand stamp of claim 5, further comprising a transport case removably mounted in the positioning frame opening for releasably supporting the receptacle prior to the engagement thereof by the platen.

Remarks.

Claims 5 has been amended; claim 9 has been canceled. No new matter has been introduced into Applicant's original disclosure as a result of the amended claims. Claims 6 and 11 have been amended in part to remove the objection raised against them under points 1 and 2 of the Official Action.

Having regard to point 4 of the Action, it is respectfully submitted that the application does not name two inventors. It is naming one inventor whose Christian name is "Wolfgang" and whose surname is "Pichler". For verification,

the Examiner is invited to direct her attention to Applicant's Declaration.

Having regard to the rejection, under point 5 of the Official Action, of claims 5, 6, 9 and 11 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being allegedly obvious in light of U.S. Patent 4,676,162 - Phipps, Sr. et al. in view of U.S. Patent 4,392,425 - Capezzuto et al., Applicant submits, with respect, that the Examiner appears to have misconstrued his invention. The '162 patent nowhere teaches a flexible foldable bellows, and the bellows taught by the '425 patent is not extending between a handle and a housing. Instead, it connects the handle to a platform for retaining a matrix.

However, Applicant's amended claim 5 patentably distinguishes the instant invention from the '162 and '425 patents. Neither of the latter two patents teaches a blank stamp platen biased into a predetermined idle position within the housing or a stamp impression member seated in a receptacle disposed intermediate the stamp platen and a frame opening in the housing or an axially foldable bellows extending between the handle and the housing or a stem surrounded by the bellows and connecting a handle to the stamp platen for moving the platen relative to the housing from the idle position into an engaging position with the receptacle or snap-fit means for connecting the platen to the receptacle.

Claim 6 being directed to an advantageous feature of the hand stamp defined in claim 5 and further limiting the elements enumerated therein is believed to be allowable as a typical sub-claim.

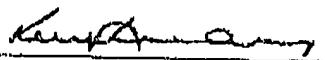
Claim 9 has been canceled, and claim 11 has been amended to clarify the ambiguity alleged under point 2 of the official action. In this connection, neither the '162 nor the '425 patent teaches or suggests a transport case removably mounted in a positioning frame opening for releasably supporting a receptacle prior to its engagement by a platen.

Claims 7 and 8 set forth advantageous embodiments of the invention broadly defined in amended claim 5 and as typical sub-claims are urged to be allowable.

The amendments set forth above have been shown by brackets and underlines in the appended paper.

It is respectfully urged that as amended the instant application is in condition for allowance which is courteously solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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Enclosure

Changes with Brackets and Underlines of Applicant's Amendment
of 2 January 2003.

5 Paragraph Page 1, lines 28 seq.

The essential drawback of these relatively complex known structures resides in the fact that it is difficult to mount stamp platens of different thicknesses since it is necessary to affix them adhesively in the stamp platen bracket connected to the stem.

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Paragraph Page 2, lines 1 seq.

The invention aims at avoiding the disadvantages of the known stamps and at providing a structurally simple hand stamp which is safe to operate. Such stamp is also to facilitate utilization of stamp [platents] platens of different

15 thicknesses and a simple way of mounting them.

Paragraph Page 2, lines 16 seq.

The structure in accordance in accordance with the invention allows a user to mount the stamp impression member as a pre-fabricated pre-inked member the first time he is using the stamp and precisely to set its vertical position without any possibility of soiling his fingers, whereby the different positions or [thickness] thicknesses of the impression member are compensated by the flexible folding bellows.

25 Page 3, line 18:

Fig. 2 is a section along line II - [ii] II in Fig. 1;

Paragraph Page 3, lines 24 seq.

As shown in Figs. 1 to 3, the stamp is provided with a housing 1 forming a 30 rectangular positioning frame 1'. The housing 1 is adapted to receive a stamp

impression member 2 to be mounted on a platen 3 which is connected to an actuating handle 5 of the stamp by means of a stem 4. A flexible folding bellows 6 is arranged between the handle 5 and the housing 1. Preferably, the flexible bellows 6 is formed integrally [formed] with the handle 5 and made by injection molding from plastic.

Paragraph Page 4, lines 14 seq.

The impression member receptacle 9 is mounted on the platen by a snap-fit connector. To this end, the platen 3 is pressed downwardly by the handle 5 and the stem 4 within the housing 1 and is frictionally positioned on the protective cover 8 until the receptacle 9 snaps into the platen 3 by means of snap-fit elements 3', 9'. The transport case 8 is removed from the housing 1, and the stamp is then in condition for use. Thus, the stamp impression member 2 may be mounted without the user having to touch it.

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5. (Amended) A hand stamp, comprising:
 - a handle;
 - a housing for forming a positioning frame opening;
 - 20 a blank stamp platen biased into a predetermined idle position within the housing for selectively supporting a stamp impression member seated in a receptacle;
 - [a flexible foldable] an axially resilient bellows extending between the handle and the housing;
 - 25 a stem in the bellows [for] and connecting the handle to the stamp platen for [selective movement thereof between the predetermined] moving the platen relative to the housing from the idle position [and a stamping] into an engaging position with the receptacle; and
 - 30 snap-fit connection means for [releasably] connecting the platen to the receptacle [to the platen].

6. (Amended) The hand stamp of claim 5, wherein the [flexible] bellows [in] is formed integrally with the handle.

11. (Amended) The hand stamp of claim 5, [wherein] further comprising a
5 transport case, removably mounted in the positioning frame opening for
releasably supporting the receptacle [is initially provided in a transport case
having a removable cap facing] prior to the [impression member] engagement
thereof by the platen.